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THE
FAMILY PRACTICE
OF
PHYSIC:
OR, A

Plain, intelligible, and easy Method
OF CURING DISEASES

With the PLANTS of our own COUNTRY.

The ASTHMA with BITTERSWEET.

The GRAVEL with UVA URSI.

The DROPSY with BARK of ELDER.

BLEEDINGS with Juice of NETTLES.

AND OTHER DISORDERS

With simple MEDICINES prepared from such PLANTS :

Which are safe, and effectual in any Hands : to be had at
a small Price in all Places in Town or Country ; and
accompanied with such Directions that any Person
may use them successfully for himself or Family: saving
to all, the Danger of rough Medicines ; and to the
Poor, the Expence of Physicians and Apothecaries.

By J. HILL, M. D. *R*

With Figures of the Plants engraved from Nature.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR in St. James's Street: And
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and J. TILLY at the Bridge-Foot.

M.DCC.LXIX.

[Price Two Shillings.]

W. Musgrave

THE
FAMILY PRACTICE
OF
PHYSIC.

INTRODUCTION.

THE purpose of this Treatise is to lay before the Public the plain and certain uses of a few Plants of our own growth; and of some Medicines prepared from others, sufficient for the cure of the most usual diseases; and so safe, that they may be trusted in the Patient's own hands.

It is hoped they will lessen that exorbitant expence which attends sickness under the hands of a Physician and Apothecary; restore the health in a much shorter period of

time ; and leave no ill effects behind them : which medicines of a more violent nature often do.

It has always appeared to the Author of these pages, that Britain produced remedies for all its own diseases. In an unremit-
ted course of attention to this subject for a great number of years, proofs of that useful truth in regard to several different diseases have occurred: these he has published as they came to his knowledge ; and with them plain directions how to treat the several disorders ; not different in general from those of other writers ; but happily confirmed by his own repeated experience.

The number being now considerable, it may be useful to place them in one view before the general eye together ; directing the manner of giving such as are to be used in their native state ; and the regimen and rules of life to be observed with those of which the Author has made preparations. This will be done upon the plan of the different Treatises, published

lished at the time of their several discoveries ;
or in abstracts from them. The medicines are
appointed to be sold by reputable persons in
all quarters of the town and country, that
it may be in every one's power, with conve-
nience and safety, to seek his relief, at the
price of a few shillings.

For those who may wish to see the par-
ticular cases treated more at large, the sever-
al distinct Tracts are republished; and where
the Author's assistance is desired, it is at every
one's command.

St. James's Street:

March 25, 1769.



CHAP. I.

The Cure of an ASTHMA, by the Herb BITTERSWEET.

AN Asthma is a difficulty of breathing ;
with a painful motion of the body,
and noise in the throat.

In some it is hereditary ; in others it arises
from a stuffing up of the lungs, by tough juices,
or concretions ; and it is often caused, always
encreased, by the stoppage of any natural
evacuations.

Foods hard of digestion must be avoid-
ed ; and all intemperance.

To

To prepare for the cure, bleeding is necessary; but a small quantity is sufficient. Four or five ounces are enough. It may be repeated as occasions require; for it always allays the symptoms.

The day after bleeding, give a gentle vomit. The powder of Ipecacuanha is very proper: but the seeds of Orach are better; of which hereafter.

If the Patient has thrown up blood at any time, the vomit must be omitted; and the cure go on without it.

It will be accomplished by the Herb Bittersweet; without farther help.

This is a woody Plant, that clambers up hedges where the ground is moist: it grows to eight foot high. The Bark is olive-coloured; the leaves are of a dull dead green; in June it is adorned with tufts of

violet-blue flowers, with yellow thrums in the middle ; and after these come red Berries, not unlike Barberries. See Pl. 1. The stalks of this Plant are the part which contain its best virtue ; and they give it so readily and compleatly to boiling water, that it is needless to seek for any other preparation than an infusion, in the manner of tea.

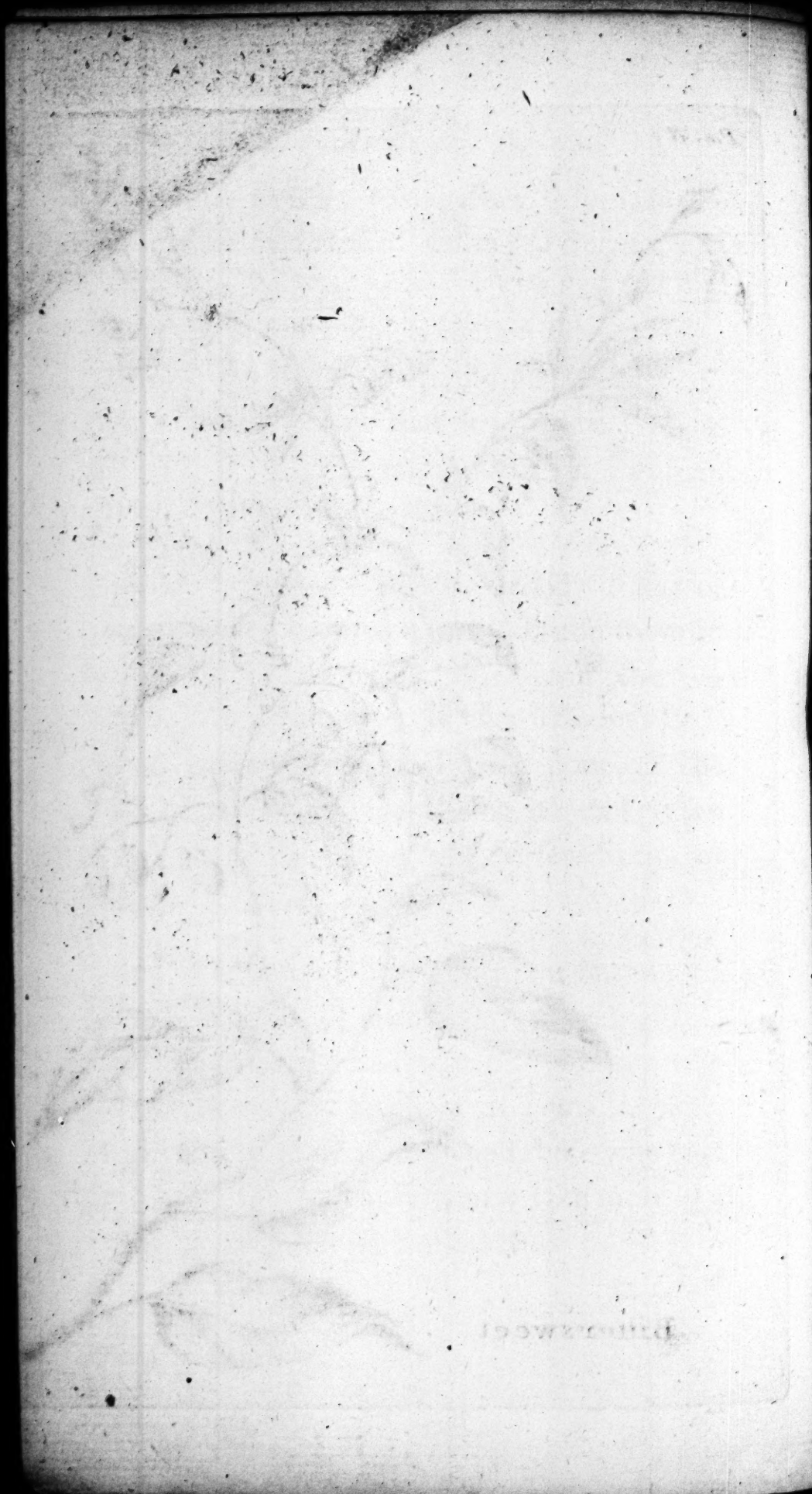
Take two ounces of the woody stalks of Bittersweet ; cut them small, bruise them in a marble mortar, and pour upon them a quart of boiling water. Cover this up ; let it stand twelve hours, and then pour off the clear liquor without squeezing it : add to it a glass of White-wine, and a few lumps of sugar.

Of this take a quarter of a pint once in six hours, warm. It operates by urine, slightly ; and requires no confinement. Persons of a tender habit may begin with a smaller dose, and encrease it every day ; and those who take a quarter of a pint at first, may take more at a time, as they continue to use it.

The



Bittersweet



The virtues of this plant are supported by the authority of the greatest modern writers; though by some strange neglect it has not got into practice with us. Boerhaave celebrates its innocence and efficacy, preferring it to the best foreign medicines. Dr. Blair used it with great success. Lobel and Tragus give it the highest praises; and Wier preferred it to most things of its kind. These writers have celebrated its efficacy also against other diseases of the breast: but those effects of British plants alone are mentioned here, which have been proved by present, personal experience.

If, in the course of the cure, particular circumstances occur, they are not difficultly provided for from the same source. If costiveness, the body must be kept open by mild purgatives, for nothing acrid can have place: the best of all these is the English Polypody.

In want of rest, though Laudanum ought not to be allowed, because it encreases the shortness

shortness of breath; half a tea-spoonful of Lettuce Wine will give repose with innocence and safety.

CH A P. II.

**The Cure of the GRAVEL and STONE by
the Herb UVA URSI.**
or Whortle-berry.

TH E R E are three degrees of this grievous complaint. In the first, loose gravel is voided, without any violent pain; in the second, small stones like barley-corns, are generated in the kidneys, and from thence pass at times with great and terrible anguish into the bladder; and are thence discharged: in the third degree of the disease, a stone too large to pass is formed either in the kidneys

neys or the bladder : whence pain, bloody urine, and other dreadful and dangerous symptoms.

In the first of these cases, a tea made of the Uva Ursi, and drank in large quantities, is perfectly sufficient : and is the very best of all remedies ; because it thoroughly cleanses, and never fails to strengthen the parts afterwards, and that way to prevent returns.

In the two other states of the disorder, more care and consideration are required ; since very different methods are needful to be observed, in the fits, and during the intervals between them. In the fits, all powerful dissolvents of the stone are to be laid aside : diluting, softening, cooling, and assuaging, are then to be the points in view.

Barley-water, with half an ounce of Gum Arabic to a quart of it, is to be drank freely ; Oil of sweet Almonds, and Manna, are to be taken, once in two or three hours ; and a

tea-spoonful of Lettuce Wine at night. By these means ; assisted, if there should be occasion, by turpentine clysters ; the fit will be got through with more than usual ease : and when the pain, irritation, and other troublesome symptoms, are entirely gone off, then, and not before, the use of Uva Ursi as a radical cure is to be begun.

Relief almost miraculous is recorded by the physicians of Vienna to have been obtained by this herb powdered : the dose of the powder is half a dram, and this is to be taken twice a day.

To prevent errors, for there have been many, a figure of the Uva Ursi is annexed, Pl. 2. It is a low woody plant, scarce exceeding ten inches in height ; but spreading, in an entangled way, about the ground. The stalks are of a ruddy brown ; the leaves are glossy, and of a fine green ; the flowers are greenish, with a blush of red towards the mouth ; the berries are black. It is not, that I



Uva Ursi

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know of, wild in England; but Scotland
abounds with it.

The bark and leaves contain the virtue. I
have tried both separate, but from experience
prefer the whole together. My custom has
been to put an ounce of this powder into a
pint and a half of water, adding half a pint
of White-wine: and to take a wine-glass of
this twice a day as a dose. From such a
course I have found great advantage: and in
this manner it may be given even during the
fit: but neither what myself have seen, nor
what is recorded by others, can give this the
credit of one radical cure.

To keep off the pain is a great thing; but
we need not to stop there: the stone may, by
degrees, be worn away; and thence a perfect
cure will follow. This is to be done only
by alkaline dissolvents; and of these Soap Leys
have been accounted best: but Soap Leys, not
being made for inward use, are not always
fit for that purpose; nor can any kind, ever so
carefully

carefully prepared, be perfectly depended on; because the potash in their composition is a thing made and imported for other purposes than medicine; that Call for it being only accidental.

I have therefore endeavoured to form a receipt for making Leys purposely for internal use: and as only an alkaline of a burnt vegetable is required for mixing with the lime in this preparation, I have produced that salt from the very herb Uva Ursi. This, if great care be taken not to overburn it, will add to the Leys so much of the virtues of the plant as can be retained in that form; and make at the same time a medicine fit for internal service. The thing is very easy, and the manner this:

Put a quantity of dried Uva Ursi into an iron pan over a clear fire not too fierce: let the herb burn just to ashes, and no longer. Boil these ashes in a large quantity of spring water: when cold, pour it off clear; and
 evapo-

evaporate it in an earthen pan till it is just dry. This dry remainder is the salt of Uva Urſi.

To make the Leys, put a pound and a half of this salt, and a pound of fresh quick Lime into an earthen pan; sprinkle upon them a very little water, and by degrees more till the Lime is fallen to pieces; then pour in as much as to make up the whole quantity of water used two pints and a half: mix all together with a wooden ladle, and let them stand a week, stirring them twice a day: then pour off the liquor clear into a bottle. There will be but little of it, but the dose is small.

This is the Ley of Uva Urſi. It is to be taken in small doses, gradually encreasing: the best method is to begin with ten or fifteen drops in a half-pint basin of veal-broth, morning and evening; and by degrees to encrease the dose to fifty drops or fixty, which is a small tea-spoonful.

This

This is to be continued a considerable time; only omitting it, if a fit comes on: and I firmly believe, there is no degree of the Stone whatsoever, that will not be perfectly cured by it. I think every good Physician will join with me in this opinion.

The diet should be light; little or no salt should be eat, no vinegar or pepper; and 'tis best to avoid all fermented liquors.

As some may think the trouble of making this medicine too great, I have directed a quantity of it to be faithfully prepared for public use, and placed it with the Publishers of this Pamphlet, &c.

C. H. A. P.

C H A P. III.

The Cure of the DROPSY by BARK of
ELDER.

A Dropsy is a collection of water in the belly : sometimes in other parts of the body ; and sometimes all over it, under the skin.

In either case the same simple remedy will be effectual ; and with due attention to the few plain and easy rules here given will never fail to cure that Disease, while it is curable by medicine.

Hard-drinking often causes the Dropsy : a Jaundice neglected or ill treated frequently brings it on : and it may follow any great and long continued obstruction. The persons most subject to it, are those advanced

in life ; such as have weak habits, or are subject to violent bleedings of any kind.

The legs usually swell first and pit : the appetite fails ; the swelling rises higher ; the face is pale, the urine is watery, and the breath short.

The more fever attends a Dropsy, the more difficult it is of cure. If spots or fores come upon the thighs, it forebodes ill. The greater the difficulty of breathing, the more stubborn the disease will prove : and, in general, the more water there is in the body, the more difficult will be the recovery.

Therefore, the sooner a Dropsy is undertaken, the greater is the hope of success ; and in almost any case timely encountered, the Bark of Elder will perform a cure.

The method of using it is this :

Cut some vigorous shoots of the common Elder ; such as are one year old ; scrape off the

the bark with a knife in thin shavings: it will be a light, juicy, tender matter.

Of this, put one ounce into a China basin; pour upon it a quarter of a pint of boiling water, and add a few Carraway seeds whole. Let this stand eighteen hours, then squeeze it off hard.

It is meant to operate briskly, both by stool and urine: the dose must be proportioned to the person's strength. Let one table-spoonful be first tried; afterwards two or more, till the quantity is found that will do what is intended. This dose is to be repeated once in three or four days, according to the strength of the person: and no other medicine will be necessary.

The Diet should be roast veal, chicken, and other white meats, with very little drink. There is a necessity of observing this caution with a determined resolution; for when the disease is supported by continual liquids, nothing can cure it.

A dry air is absolutely necessary ; and moderate exercise. To patients extremely weak there must be five days intervals between the purges ; and wine, with the ashes of broom infused in it, is to be given in the other days, to operate by urine.

When a cure is perfected, which in all curable cases it will be by Elder, a good air, and a resolute abstaining from liquids ; a return will be prevented by a Tea made of Centaury, described in a succeeding chapter : or better by the Tincture of that excellent Herb, because the Tea is watery.

Elder Bark, in the hands of the great Ratcliffe, did wonders : and it is not strange ; for it opens every passage by which the disease can be carried off ; by the bowels, urine, and sweat : and is at the same time a cordial, and an easer of pain.

C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

The Cure of BLEEDINGS at the Nose
by the JUICE of NETTLES.

Bleedings at the Nose, when slight, are often salutary ; but when they are great in quantity, or frequent in their returns, they are sometimes in themselves dangerous ; or bring on the worst diseases : among these, Dropsies have too often followed great losses of blood this way.

In salutary Bleedings at the Nose, a fulness of blood alone is the cause ; and Nature relieves herself, this way, preventing some disease : in those of a worse kind, a sharpness of the blood is usually the source ; sometimes a weakness or hurt of the vessels by ulcers.

A pain in the head usually precedes bleeding at the nose. If at the same time there is a redness of the eyes, and a violent pulse in the temples, the case is the worse.

People most subject to these bleedings are florid youths; those who use extraordinary exercise, or persons disposed to hectic fevers.

In full habits and intemperate persons, these bleedings are hardest to cure: if the patient be feverish, and if the breathing be difficult at the same time, the more caution is to be used in the diet and other respects.

The remedy is the Juice of the common Great Stinging Nettle; no figure is given of this plant or the Elder; for they are known to every one: nor is it necessary to say, they grow every-where. Take up the roots of common Stinging Nettles, wipe them clean, and bruise them in a marble mortar, with a small piece of cinnamon. Press out the juice hard, let it settle a little; give the Patient a table-spoonful once in half a quarter of

of an hour, during the bleeding; and continue the same dose, or a larger, three times a day, for many weeks afterwards. Bruise a little more of the same roots, without any cinnamon, and let him snuff up a small quantity of the juice frequently, while the bleeding continues.

Plain, simple, and innocent as this remedy is, the effect is wonderful. Nothing more is needed. Nor is its efficacy limited to this kind of bleeding only: Spittings of blood, threatening the worst consequences, have been perfectly, and safely cured by it: even the bleeding of corroding ulcers is assuaged by it; and that from Cancers: but in these, that symptom only yields to it; the herb can do nothing towards a general cure.

The Patient's diet must be low; his drink barley-water, with gum arabic boiled in it. He must indulge a great deal of sleep, and use very little exercise. All his liquids must be drank cold. Jellies are very proper food,

and those made with isinglass better than any.

Bleeding at the arm is often necessary : It gives the first check to the disorder ; which the Nettle juice soon after cures intirely.

CHAP. V.

The Cure of the JAUNDICE by the
Herb AGRIMONY.

IN this and two or three of the succeeding Chapters, which treat of subjects whereon the Author has published his thoughts at large in separate Treatises, the general directions for family practice will be extracted thence : referring such as wish to see each subject treated more fully, to the separate Pamphlets

phlets themselves. What is here meant, is one comprehensive view of the whole; with the sole aim of common use.

The Jaundice is a mixture of too much gall with the blood; and shews itself by a yellowness of the skin. The patient feels a continued anxiety, and a disgust to all exercise or motion: the body becomes costive; and the stools are white: the urine is high-coloured, bright, and fiery; it affords a high yellow froth; and linen dipped in it becomes yellow, as if dyed. The skin grows perfectly yellow; but the whites of the eyes most of all. There is a frequent itching; a heartburn often attends at times; and some have fainting fits.

When this Disease has held a person for any considerable time, there is a continual bitter taste in the mouth; and the very sweat is sometimes bitter: to some persons in this stage all objects seem yellow; and the sweat, in others, will stain the sheets and linen to that colour.

In

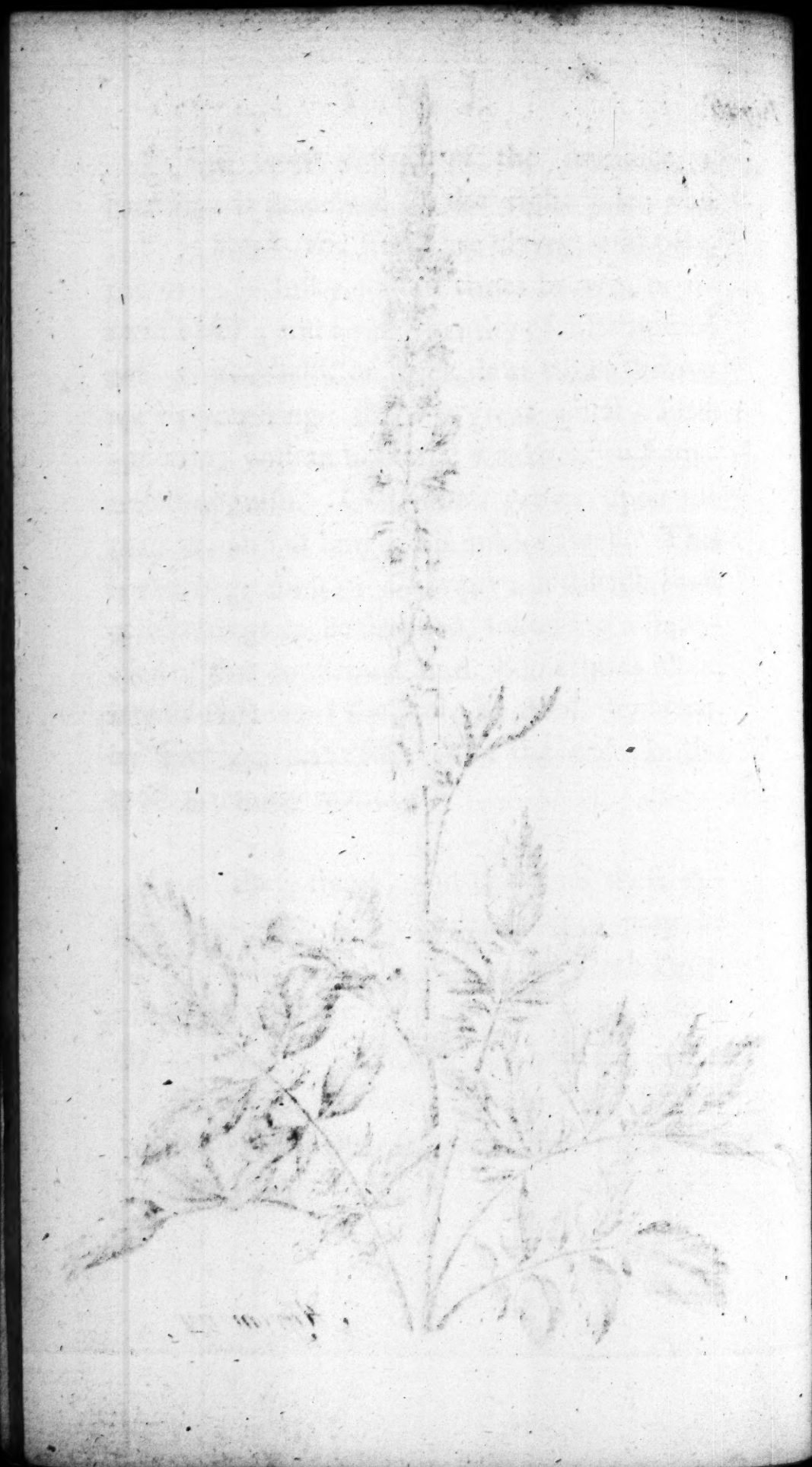
In the worst degree of the Jaundice, a hardness is perceived in the right side: the pulse is weak, the stools are clayey, and pale, the urine is dusky, and at times brown, or almost black; and a vast quantity of distempered gall, green, livid, or black, is at times thrown up by vomiting: there is great thirst; little appetite; and an universal weakness and continual anguish. Costiveness grows upon the patient; and at length his ankles swell. This is the beginning of a Dropsy; a disease most of all things to be dreaded, following a Jaundice of that confirmed kind. Sometimes blood is voided toward the end, by stool, by urine, by spitting; and often from the nose in the most alarming manner.

In all these stages, and under all these appearances, the greatest dependance may be safely placed upon the celebrated Herb Agrimony: It will be easily known from a short description.

It is a wild Plant, common in our dry barren pasture grounds; and by road sides, and
under



Agrimonia



under hedges. It grows to two foot and a half high, an upright spiry Plant, with a brown stalk, pale green leaves, and a long slender spike of little yellow flowers, followed by rugged, hairy seeds.

The leaves of this Plant possess its virtues in a very high degree ; but the crown of the root has them in the greatest perfection. The seeds are only to be used in the particular case of bloody stools attending this disease, but in this they exceed all other medicines. This was the dysentery for which the ancients held them above all things in virtue.

As to the manner of giving Agrimony ; it will convey its virtues freely and fully to common water ; and this is a ready and very good way of taking it : but, for those who prefer a yet greater Power of the Herb, there is a Tincture.

Strip off half a pound of the fresh leaves of Agrimony ; clip them to pieces, and pour upon them, in a stone mug, a quart of boiling
water ;

water ; cover up the mug ; and let it stand twenty-four hours ; then press the liquor off. Let it settle to be quite clear ; and take it at four doses, eight hours distant from one another ; sweetening it with honey.

The body must be open all this time : if it is naturally so, the better ; if not, half a pint of Jessops-well water, or any other of the purging waters, must be turned with milk into a kind of whey, and taken occasionally ; not to purge ; but merely to prevent costiveness.

When all is over, a somewhat larger dose of the same whey should be taken twice, to operate as a purge, and carry off any thing that might remain after the disease.

When the Jaundice is long confirmed, not the leaves, but the crown of the root of Agrimony, is the part to be depended on. This is the place where the root ceases, and the stalk and leaves begin ; that part of the plant which is between earth and air.

Therefore

Therefore take up the roots of Agrimony to the length of an inch, with the buds upon them : of these cut to pieces six ounces, bruise them in a marble mortar, and pour upon them a quart of boiling water. Let this stand twenty-four hours, after which the liquor is to be strained off, and taken just as the former, sweetened with honey.

While this is making, let the person take a vomit. The morning after, let the Agrimony tea be taken, and continued thrice a day without intermission, till the disease is conquered. In what time this will be, depends upon the particular nature of the case, and the time the disorder has had to strengthen itself ; but that the cure will follow, is as certain as any thing in physic.

High-seasoned dishes should be avoided : nothing stronger than wine must be tasted ; and of that the usual quantity is to be gradually diminished. The best drink is whey, made from new milk ; and of this the more is taken the better.

If

If the person be inclined to costiveness, Rhubarb is the thing he should apply to in this stage of this disease,

Exercise is to be used ; and Spa water may be drank moderately with advantage.

If nature should take a tendency to a purging, this is not to be suppressed, but moderately encouraged, by enlarging the dose of the Rhubarb.

If a troublesome itching and sudden tendency to sweat come on, let the patient go to bed, and take a dose of the Agrimony warm, once in half an hour, for five or six times.

As the cure advances, the stools will get their natural colour ; the yellowness of the eyes will go off ; and the skin will begin to recover its former appearance.

All that is necessary, after the cure, is to take three or four doses of the Rhubarb, at distant times.

In the worst state, which is called the Black Jaundice, exercise is often painful; but those to whom a horse has been offensive, have found great good by walking; and if the motion of a coach can be endured, it is yet better.

Rhubarb must be taken in this state more carefully and constantly than in the former.

If the urine become darker coloured, and less in quantity, more whey must be drank; and the juice of Dandelion squeezed into it, or of Wild Succory.

A piece of thick flannel should be constantly worn next the skin, over the whole part of the body where the hardness is felt.

The appetite will grow better during this course, as also the digestion; for, beside the qualities of the Agrimony, the Rhubarb tends to this good purpose.

If bloody stools come on, the seeds of
Agrimony

Agrimony are to be made into a tea, just as the leaves.

When the hardness of the right side becomes less, or when gall-stones are voided by stool, there is rational hope of a cure; even in this case.

CHAP. VI.

The Cure of the SCURVY by the Herb WATER-DOCK.

THE Scurvy is often misunderstood, where it does not appear externally; and mismanaged where it does; many things are in common use as remedies, which provoke and increase the disorder.

Where the Disease shews itself upon the skin, there can be no mistake; but where
it

it is latent, there may be a thousand : for there is scarce any disease it will not imitate.

The stomach is often weak ; and bitters are taken in vain : the spirits are low ; and recourse is had to cordials : which inflame the disease.

The effect is very different in either case, when the simple remedy Dock is taken : the stomach is at ease as soon as it is swallowed ; the spirits, though not elated, become at once composed ; and we enjoy that satisfaction, which they only can value who have known the want of it ; the supreme pleasure of tranquillity.

Sometimes a slight eruption appears upon taking the Dock : but let not this alarm the patient : he may securely rejoice in it. It declares to a conviction, the true nature of his complaint ; and is always slight ; and never continues more than a few days.

The plain and certain way, in which the

D

Medicine

medicine acts, is this ; always consistently, and always alike : its first effort is by insensible perspiration : it opens the obstructed pores, gives passage to the offending humour which is there ; and throws more thither, of what was in the blood ; to go off the same way.

If there be more of it than can be so discharged ; or if perhaps what is there be in its nature too gross to pass that way ; there is then, in a few hours, a more than ordinary discharge of urine ; and instantly on this the whole frame and constitution are relieved. The patient feels, by the new ease and unaccustomed cheerfulness he enjoys, that he has had more of the Scurvy than was to be seen upon his skin : and he sets a proper value on the means of his relief.

These are effects of Water-Dock : not slightly brought together, or hastily set down ; but what have been collected from a great number of instances, all agreeing in the several particulars, and confirming one another.

Pa 35



Water Dock.

Whatever could drive in the Scurvy, would convert the mildest, into the worst kind of that disease.

I claim no merit as a discoverer of the virtues of Dock: they were known in the earliest days of literature; and have been handed down to us, through a succession of ages, by the best writers. All the praise that can belong to me is, that, at a time when chymistry has overrun natural physic, I have restored its use.

There are many kinds of Dock, but one species alone possesses this great virtue: it is therefore fit it should be distinctly known; and this is easy; for it exceeds the rest in stature as much as virtue. It grows only in wet places; not usually in water, but always near it. The leaves are half a yard long, and of a fine pleasant green; the stalk is six feet high, robust, erect, and crimson; on its top grow spikes of greenish flowers, and after these large seeds of a reddish brown.

In the middle of April the roots should be

dug up; taking only those of a year and half's growth, and which have not yet flowered. They are at that time a foot long, and more than an inch in diameter; of a ruddy brown on the outside, and when cut of a deep orange colour.

They are to be wiped with a clean coarse cloth, and split. The inner bark alone contains the virtue of the plant; as I have found by manifold experience. Therefore the hard woody part in the middle of the root is to be taken out, as useless; and the bark being again rubbed well with the cloth, the outer rind which is thin and tender will come off, and only the useful inner bark remain. This is to be dried in an airy room, where the sun does not shine; and afterwards to be powdered.

In this is the whole virtue of the plant: and it is a cure for the Scurvy, even more certain than the bark is for an ague. The dose of the powder is one dram, and this is to be taken twice a day till the complaint is wholly

wholly removed. The ESSENCE which I direct to be made has the same virtue. This I have contrived for the convenience of those who cannot get the root ; or cannot depend upon it : and if it have any advantages beside these, it is in being more convenient, easier to take, and performing the cure in less time. It is made from this inner bark, by a method which I have never concealed from physicians, and which I should add here, but that it would be of no use either to private families, or to the preparers of medicines ; requiring a bark bed, such as we have in stoves, and other implements not used in the common operations ; so that it is altogether impossible they should make it.

This Essence sits better upon the stomach than a large dose of a powder ; is speedier in its effects ; and, if I have been able to increase or exalt the virtues of the root by preparation, it has all that advantage. In the course of these observations I have been obliged to say more of the Essence than of the Root, because most of the cures I have

seen were performed with it: not from any diffidence of mine in the effect of the root itself; but from the difficulty I have found to prevail with the patient to swallow so large a quantity as is needful of the powder; or at best to continue it a due time.

As to the degree of virtue in the Essence, a tea-spoonful is equal to the dose here mentioned of the Powder.

What I have endeavoured here is, in a few plain words, supported by facts in the course of a number of years; and of all which I believe there are living witnesses; to shew that there is no degree or kind of that disease we call the Scurvy, but may be cured with certainty by this simple medicine; and that the use of it is free even from the possibility of harm. There requires no skill in physic, to know that nothing can do hurt in the Scurvy unless it can repel; and that is a quality not only not existing in the Dock, but perfectly contradictory to its nature.

No

No particular regimen, or course of life, is required on account of this medicine, nor any preparation of the body for it : nay, these things are not only needless, but I have found them hurtful.

Those are fallacious cures which depend upon a reduced diet ; and I have always found, that when the person so relieved returned to his former method of living, the disease returned also ; and often with more violence.

A good air is of great use in the cure of every disease, but of none more than this.

A sedentary life is a great cause of mischief from the Scurvy.

A red face, or crusted arms or legs, or fiery pimples on the back or breast, are the most usual troubles that attend the Scurvy, with a life of exercise ; but these eruptions being out, the patient enjoys health and spirits, nay, the more out, the more ; and add to this, the cure is much the easier.

There is one thing which it grieves me to accuse, and yet it must be named, nay and strict caution must be given against it, as injurious in the Scurvy: this is study. The pleasure of reading is not the thing meant here; but that fixed attention of mind which accompanies the researches into science. The mathematics are of the number of these studies, and that extent of mind, by which men have sometimes endeavoured to comprehend within one view the whole of visible created beings; and by arranging them in their true place, to understand as it were the purposes of God.

These are studies under which the mind, fixed to one point, conversing in itself, and busied with its own ideas, forgets the body: and in these cases the body always languishes; and often in the end perishes entirely. These men seem to act every day the last scene of Archimedes, and bid death stay, as he bad the soldier, till they have finished the demonstration.

Persons

Persons of this kind deserve our admonitions most of all men ; and they want them most : nor do they ever need them more than when they have a scorbutic taint already in the blood : for under this course of life it is always latent. I have been willing to think that it was not the effect of study, but the want of exercise attendant on this kind of life, that gave so much occasion to disorders ; but instances have come before me proving it otherwise ; and I think one of the most obstinate cases that ever I have known was of a geometri-
cian, whom I directed to use exercise as much as could be needful, but in vain.

I dare not rank myself among such men as these ; but, since no experience is so certain as that one feels within one's own body, I shall venture to add, in confirmation of this, that notwithstanding all the exercise I have been able to take, and of every other good regulation that I know, about two months since, while I was intent upon arranging plants in the method of nature, a scorbutic humour which had never before been very trouble-
some

some to me, grew to such a height, that it required a five weeks course of Dock, and I take it in large doses too, to get the better of it.

The first thing to be sought by the scorbutic patient is a good air, and of all good qualities the greatest in this case is that it be dry. The side of a hill, upon a gravelly soil, with a West aspect, is the most desirable; the top of a hill, or an exposure without shelter to the North, I have always found tend to fixing eruptions upon the face, or other uncovered parts of the body.

Exercise proportioned to the strength, and at the best hours of the day, will prove highly serviceable; and most of all so in a course of the Essence of Water-Dock: walking or riding out always after taking the dose. Which therefore should be taken in these cases at hours most proper for exercise. This increases that perspiration which the Dock naturally brings on; and, with care not to get cold

cold after it, will make one dose as effectual as two or three.

The amusement of reading will be as useful, as too much fixed attention would be bad ; always being upon the guard that this does not intrench upon the hours of exercise.

Meats easiest of digestion are best : the less of salted things are eat, at any time, the better ; but, during the course of any medicine for the cure of this complaint, such things should be more particularly avoided.

Pepper is best let alone, and spirituous liquors, which inflame the disorder always ; and in many instances fix it in the face, in the most troublesome manner. As to wine and malt liquors, no cure of the Scurvy, as has before been said, will ever be lasting, which depends upon the abstaining from these ; for upon the return to them the disease itself will follow.

Such

Such is the general state of scorbutic disorders, and their cure ; but in this disease, as in all others, there will be here and there a singular instance ; where, either from the natural conformation of the skin, peculiar in some particular subjects, or from an hereditary, or perhaps a mixed taint in the blood, a more than ordinary obstinacy is found in the complaint : but even in these, of so many of them as have come before me, I never have found the addition of any other medicine necessary. A warm bath has sometimes opened the way to a cure ; and if the fair beginning made by that has seemed to fail afterwards, I have known a flannel waistcoat next the skin answer the purpose.

Once, and only once, I have seen a case where nothing but abstaining from meat, and fermented liquors, would give the medicines their due efficacy ; and, when the cure was thus obtained, I was in constant apprehension of a return, upon the usual course of life being resumed. But this was done very gradually ; the Dock being at times continued ;
and

and the patient, though near three years are now passed since, continues well.

C H A P. VII.

The Use of C E N T A U R Y as a
S T O M A C H I C.

W A N T of appetite, and sickness after meals, with extreme weakness, and giddiness of the head, are complaints one hears from every mouth ; and it is no uncommon aggravation of the misery, that B I T T E R S have been tried in vain.

What has caused these disorders to increase might be a long enquiry, and uncertain ; but perhaps late hours, intemperance, and high fauces, claim the greater share. Our ancestors were healthier than ourselves, because
they

they were more moderate and regular: they felt less of the night air, and saw more sun in the morning; they lived on a plainer food, and knew little of the fiery spices. God designed these for countries where they grow: with us they have continually disagreed.

There may be other causes of the complaint; but these seem the principal.

Hence arise in succession the following symptoms; the misery of every day; though in some days, and to some persons, more or less than others. Tiresome nights; with a wretched uneasiness, and disgust of every thing at waking; a taste as it were of ashes in the mouth; and a loathing of the very thought of food; faintness, weakness, wearisomeness; and at times sickness, without vomiting; and in many a continued heart-burn.

After eating, especially after the principal meal, a swelling in the body, much more than the due effect of quantity: a dull but lasting pain in the stomach; and often a heat and
redness

redness in the face, as if from drinking ; an overfulness in the breast ; and sometimes a sense as it were of suffocation, alleviated perhaps a moment by belching, and sometimes by vomiting : but these must not be thought reliefs in the disease, they are its symptoms.

These complaints the physician tries to cure with stomachics ; or, as they are more commonly called, Bitters : the drugs of which they are composed are few, and none are better known by name ; but perhaps their particular qualities have not been enough considered. Gentian and Roman Wormwood, Orange-peel and Cardamoms, make up the account ; and of these Gentian frequently stands in the place of all. Let us consider distinctly their several properties ; the good and ill that is in them ; and then see whether nature and our own country may not furnish better.

Gentian heats and binds the body : qualities by which it often does more harm, than good by all its virtues.

Roman

Roman Wormwood is a Bitter, but an unpleasant one ; and 'tis liable to the same exception with Gentian, for heating and binding. Hence the most judicious have been always cautious in the use of it. Galen asserts its heating quality is greater than its stomachic.

Orange-Peel is less bitter than these ; but it is more acrid : it has not enough of the stomachic quality to be given alone ; and, when mixed with the others, often brings on the heart-burn.

Cardamoms are no Bitter : they are warm and carminative, and are therefore commonly mixed with Bitters ; but Cardamoms are too hot and fiery for general use ; and there are many disorders of the stomach, in which they cannot be given without great hurt.

One or other of these ingredients are given in all Bitters ; no others are in general use but these ; and the most common practice is to give them all together. I would not be understood

understood to condemn the use of them : 'tis plain they may do good ; but it is as evident they may do harm. I would have them therefore left to the phyfician. In his hands they are safe ; but even in his, they are not always found fufficiently effectual.

In Small Centaury, upon repeated trials, I have found there is a Bitter ; cleaner, pleasanter, and wholesomer, than in all the others ; and that without the leaft tendency to any of their faults. Centaury is a ftomachic, and nothing elfe : it has that quality pure, feparate, and alone ; and is therefore preferable, in all reason, to thofe things in which other properties are joined with this, which render them unfit for general ufe.

To this end it will be neceffary to know diftinctly what the plant is, what are its virtues, in what part of it they refide, and under what form they may be beft communicated to the body.

This Centaury is a wild plant, common in

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many parts of England in dry pastures; an Annual, that makes its first appearance in April, and flowers from July to the end of summer. It grows to six or eight inches high: the stalk is square; the leaves are oval, and of a fresh green; the flowers, which stand in a thick cluster on the top, are crimson. There is abundance of it in Hertfordshire, and the neighbouring counties; but the place where I have seen it in the most extreme perfection is at Bulstrode*.

The virtues of this plant are limited to one point; this is strengthening the stomach: but by doing this, it prevents many diseases, and indeed often cures them. A bad digestion is the first source of most disorders; and that which is a remedy for this, cannot be inefficacious as to the others.

Centaury never fails to give an appetite;

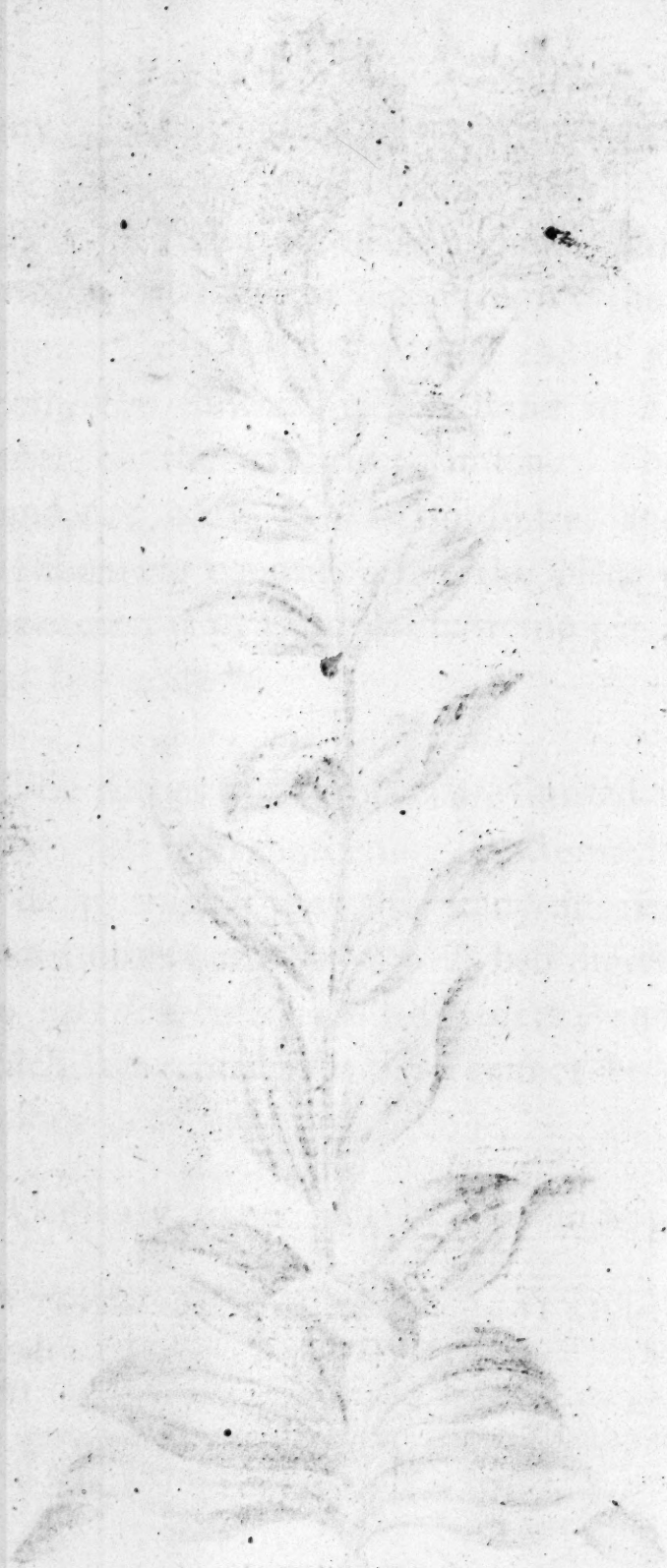
* The seat of the Duchess of Portland; a lady who has knowledge in these things beyond her sex. There is a select spot in her Grace's garden kept for the growth of the scarce English plants; where they rise among the grass in all their native wildness.

and

Pa. 50



Centaury



and though the meal be larger that is eat in consequence of it, no sickness or uneasiness of any kind follows ; because the medicine having prepared the constitution, it can be digested.

The stomach often is oppressed and loaded by a cold tough phlegm : It is but a slight and temporary help to give this a discharge by vomit ; for the same cause remaining will produce more. Centaury dissolves it perfectly ; and at the same time curing that weakness in the stomach which gave rise to it, no more will be formed there.

If any one finds an indifference to his meals, nay, if it amounts to a loathing of all food, he need only take this herb to be cured perfectly.

Wind that disturbs the stomach after eating, and increases that indigestion which first caused it, is dispersed intirely by this excellent medicine, and that without any sensible evacuation.

He who takes it may assure himself of easy nights ; and days of chearfulness : strength grows with the use of it, and he will find himself alert, and prompted to that exercise which will compleat his cure.

Being assured of these valuable qualities in Centaury, the next step of rational enquiry will be, in what part of the plant they principally reside : for in all plants the root, the leaves, the flowers, the seeds, are different ; at least in the degree of virtue : and it is vain and fruitless to load the body, or disgust the palate, with what can never be of use.

The leaves and root possess the perfect virtue. They are both bitter in an intense degree ; but, more than all, the part which lies between the root and stalk ; and which is properly called the crown of the root. This is a hard brownish gland, or cluster of vessels ; in which the juices possessing the great power of the plant reside ; and which are always full ; from the first appearance of the
leaves

leaves above ground, till near the time of flowering.

The seeds of Centaury, scattered by the winds in August and September, lie dormant on the earth all winter ; protected from injuries of the air by the grass ; and from insects by their own bitterness : in April they send up a few leaves, and from that time till the end of May, these and the roots are strengthening themselves in size and virtue : during this time the whole is very bitter ; and it was to the herb in this state that some early writers gave the name GALL OF THE EARTH : FEL TERRÆ.

Early in June the stalk begins to rise, and from this time to its bud for flowering, as I have found by careful trials, the whole plant, and particularly the crown of the root here mentioned, increases in bitterness.

The state in which I have found Centaury fittest for use is just before its flowering. It is to be pulled up by the roots at that time,

and spread in an airy room to dry. When dried, my method is to cut off the roots, with their crown ; then to cut off the young tops, and afterwards to strip the leaves off from their stalks.

If one takes into one's mouth the crown of the root of Centaury, just gathered, and lightly dried, at this season ; one perceives, on chewing it, a comfortable warmth which all the other Bitters want, and which the physician's art adds to them, by Cardamoms and other foreign ingredients : but art in these things is poor, compared with nature. Together with this gentle and pleasing glow, one tastes a Bitter of the most agreeable kind, not nauseous or disgustful, as in most others ; and with this a light austerity ; such as all strengtheners have. These three flavours we perceive in it distinctly ; and from this combination, he, who is used to medicines, cannot but know that he has here in nature, all and more than all his predecessors art has tried, to bring together.

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The next thing is to find in what form these virtues may be best communicated to the human body : whether in powder, tincture, or infusion.

Powders of all kinds are disgustful, and bitter powders most : it is with weak stomachs we have to deal in this case, and therefore that form must be certainly excluded. Experience gives also its support to reason in this case : the herb in powder has been given with success ; but less than in the other way ; and always with disgust and difficulty to the patient.

The two methods that remain are tincture and infusion ; and in respect of these the choice must be determined by the nature of the plant. Tinctures and infusions differ only in the liquid that is employed to make them : if we use spirit, we call the medicine a tincture ; if water, an infusion ; or decoction. The virtues of all herbs reside in their richer juices : and these are in some resinous, in others gummy ; and in most, they are of a mixt nature, composed of those two ; and are

called resinous or gummy, as the one or the other prevails in the composition. Where the virtues of a plant are in a resinous juice, spirit must be used, and the proper form is a tincture; where in a gummy; water is best, and the method is by infusion. Finally; in tinctures a spirit of more or less strength must be used, as the juices are more or less resinous. We have always been accustomed to resinous juices in the vegetables of warmer climates; and therefore tinctures of such have been generally made with Spirit of wine: in respect of our own plants, their juices were supposed to be usually of the gummy kind, and the form physicians chose for giving them was therefore an infusion. It appeared strange when some few years ago I produced a resinous tincture of Water-Dock; and a great many vain words were spoke against me by idle people on the occasion; the fate of better men who have advanced new truths: but these censures fall to the ground of themselves. The traveller need not alight to tread upon the grasshoppers.

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The case is the same with Centaury as with Dock: its virtue resides in a resinous juice; and a tincture is the best and most effectual way of giving it. As the doctrine is now less new, it will not find so much opposition; nor, if it should, am I now alone in the support of it. What many thought strange here; the learned and industrious Germans tried: and happily there is, in the case of Centaury, the authority of one among the most eminent of them, whose experience testifies the same with mine; and shews they have taken the wrong course, who to obtain its virtues infused the plant in water. This author asserts in the plainest and most express words, not only that the herb contains a resinous juice; but that its Bitterness, and consequently its virtues, reside almost intirely in that juice *.

Upon the faith of such testimony strengthening and supporting what experience has shewn me, I may venture to neglect the slight

* Partes resinosa maximam exhibent amaritiem, gummosa fere nullam. Nich. Mater. Med. 1762.

opinions of such as cannot leave the common tract of judging. When they have learned more, they will be less exceptious: knowledge is circumscribed in narrow bounds; but there are none to ignorance.

A Tincture made from the roots and leaves of Centaury, in a spirit perfectly rectified, and with the advantages of long maceration, in an uniform heat, is properly a solution of all the valuable parts of it: resembling the Herb so perfectly in smell, taste, and flavour, that one perceives it in a moment to be no other than the plant itself in a liquid form.

It readily mixes with water, and becomes a most pleasant stomachic; strengthening and reviving, even as it passes down the throat: there is in it no fiery heat, no disgustful Bitterness, nothing of that unpleasing sensation, which dwells upon the tongue after the more usual stomachics; but just enough warmth to be comfortable, and as much of a clean Bitter as is useful. The taste of the root has been mentioned before; between that and the

the tincture there is in this respect no difference : but in the effect there is infinite ; and all to the advantage of the preparation. The plain and simple herb is a very good medicine, but this tincture as much exceeds its natural state, as that exceeds other stomachics.

To those who have reason, and will use it, this will not appear strange. Dry roots, and all substances of like kind, are beyond the reach of our digestive faculties, to manage perfectly. The powers and humours of our stomachs are calculated for our food : there may be other menstruums found for medicines. In many cases, (more than have been published) I have observed that, when what we call a tincture, amounts nearly to a dissolution of the subject ; as those in bark beds with a fit menstruum, usually do ; it conveys the powers of the medicine to the body, in a way far superior to that in which our own natural organs could supply them. He who does not readily comprehend the force of this, may do well to consider what difference there is between

tween mercury dissolved in menstruums, and given in its own substance. But enough : this will convince such as have a right to understand ; and it would be an ill office to the public, to teach those who could only make a bad use of the instruction.

A tea spoonful of this tincture given in a small glass of cold water, to a person who has a weak stomach, want of appetite, and sickness, with a heaviness of the head, after meals ; and this continued some time, has the following effects,

The first dose warms the stomach, and takes off that languor, and sense of weakness, which always attend these complaints. The patient finds himself relieved at once ; and grows in some degree easy, hearty, and cheerful.

The best time of taking it is an hour before dinner ; and he finds also, in consequence, a better appetite.

If he takes such another dose at night, the same sensation of warmth, strength, and cheerfulness, are felt ; he has better rest than he is accustomed to, and rises more at ease in the morning. The advantage he has thus found will certainly encourage him to continue the medicine ; and in a few weeks he will be freed from his complaints.

I have carefully inquired whether the body became more open, or bound, from the continued use of Centaury ; and have found that it has no effect either way in that respect.

Those to whom it will be directly and immediately beneficial are such as have a weak stomach ; who want appetite to their meals, are swelled and sick after them, and, upon any little irregularity, are liable to purgings, with griping pains.

These are complaints so very frequent, that it is no small happiness to have a remedy at hand for them. But beside these, there are many other disorders which have their origin

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from

from bad digestion ; and in all such this medicine will be serviceable : many of them by timely use of it, will be totally prevented.

The stomach in gouty people is very subject to disorders, and it is a custom in that case to have recourse to spirituous liquors, or to the highest kinds of cordials ; the vulgar calling for Uisquebaugh, the man of more refinement for Sir Walter Raleigh's cordial ; but both are wrong ; and I need not add, the first pernicious.

Instead of either, a single dose of the Centaury never fails to quiet the disorder ; and this with no farther consequence, either good or ill, attending it. The medicine seems to take effect on the complaint for which it was given, and in this case to carry its operation no farther.

Perhaps a continued use of it may be of high service against this, as well as other complaints : great things are said of it in that respect ;

spect; but I have not yet had experience to confirm the reports.

Persons who from an obstruction in the viscera labour under a load of complaints, without being able to name any one particular disease, a case very common, and too little pitied, or regarded; who have pale flesh, weak limbs, want of strength, and wearisome uneasiness in exercise; and indeed in every thing they go about; such will find immediate and certain benefit from this medicine: and by continuing the use of it, a lasting cure. They will perceive their strength and spirits return; they will be able to use that exercise which was so necessary for them, yet which they loathed to take; and life and colour will gradually appear again in their pale and feeble face and limbs.

But this is not all: these habits tend to danger; and though weakness only shews itself, diseases lurk behind. Jaundice and Dropsy follow; and make short work with the patient, who is perhaps too weak for help,
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and too weary of his life to attend to the preserving it.

This medicine, by removing the obstruction which gave rise to the first of those disorders, prevents the others; and while it seems only to sweeten life, preserves it.

Add to these virtues, that Centaury is a cordial, friendly to nature, and ready to give regulated, continued, and uninterrupted spirits; and we shall thus see the detail of its great qualities: many and wonderful in a simple herb; but less strange to the eye of the judicious physician, than they might appear to the vulgar; because all depend upon one principle, and, though so various in their appearance, all rise from one source.

The good effects of Centaury, as of all medicines, may be assisted by a careful regimen: for which intent receive these friendly admonitions.

Chew your food well before you swallow it.
There

There is a proverb in the East, that he who does not chew his food hates his own life. They were a wise people; and the sentence should be before our eyes for ever, while we are eating.

When age has taken away the teeth, or when they are weak from any other cause, all food must be cut thin and small: Nature intended it to go, in this condition, into the stomach; and we oppress her when it is delivered thither in large morsels.

Eat less than you can; for an over quantity even of the most innocent things is hurtful.

Avoid salted meats; chuse such as are easiest of digestion; and be sparing in the use of vegetables.

Take but a little supper; but do not go without it; and let the same rule be observed at breakfast. They err who recommend only one meal in the day, for the stomach should

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not be loaded at some times, and empty at others.

Keep regular hours; go to bed before midnight, and rise early; use exercise in a good air; and every dose of the bitters will be as good as three.

Above all things, be careful of your drink. Spirituous liquors always hurt the stomach; what we call wine, I am afraid, in general contains too much of them. Beer is preferable, unless in such as are too much inclined to fat; and with those cyder will often agree better than all other liquors.

Too much tea is injurious to most people, after the middle term of life: but to others about two dishes an hour after dinner often help digestion.

C H A P.

C H A P. VIII.

The Virtues of WILD VALERIAN
in NERVOUS DISORDERS.

BY VALERIAN, druggists understand the root of the large English plant of that name: its superior virtues having, in a great measure, banished the other kinds. This is a common wild herb: it grows on heaths, by rivers, and in woods: but it does not, in all these places, possess equally its virtues. When in perfection, it is of the aromatic kind: we know such qualities depend, in a great measure, on sun and air; and are impaired always, and often destroyed utterly, by shade and water. Therefore the roots of Valerian which have grown upon dry hills and sun-burnt heaths, possess its virtues in the highest

degree; and such only should be used in medicine. Unluckily the plant is more common by waters than on heaths; and the roots are in wet places larger and more easily taken up. A pound of these is brought into the shops for every dram of the other: and as they are greatly inferior in their qualities, the physician is disappointed who depends on them.

Not only the virtues, but the stature, colour, and whole aspect of the plant, are altered by this watery nourishment: and though in reality these are only varieties, occasioned in the common course of nature, by the different soil, and seen in other herbs as well as this; yet they are so considerable in the present instance, that Mr. Ray and others have given the heath or mountain Valerian a distinct place in their catalogues of plants; accounting it a different species from that growing by waters.

In woods it assumes a form distinct from both; and properly is of a middle kind between them. Its virtues are also of a middle character;



TRUE WILD VALERIAN

Pa. 69.



WATER VALERIAN

character ; inferior to the Heath, and superior to those of the Water Valerian.

The excellence of the first of these kinds is such, that no other should be used ; and there is enough of it for the demand, if the gathering the wrong kind were discouraged. The distinction is obvious, as will appear by the succeeding characters : and as the term WILD belongs equally to the wood and water kinds, as well as the true, perhaps it will be proper to distinguish that hereafter by the name **HEATH VALERIAN.**

As all the three are only varieties, or different states of the same plant, one general description will serve for it in all those states ; and, after its form and characters are thus understood, it will be the easier to explain the particular distinctions, under those several appearances.

The root is composed of many long fibres joined to a small head. The stalk is erect, round, and hollow. The leaves stand in pairs ;

and each is composed of many pairs of lesser leaves joined to a long rib, with an odd one at the end. The flowers are small and reddish; and they stand in large tufts at the top of the stalk and branches. Each flower, as in the other Valerians, is formed of one piece; and is tubular at the base, swelled out on one side; and is cut into five parts at the rim. It has no cup; and it is followed by a single seed.

This is the form and figure of the plant in whatever soil or situation it grows: but the distinctions of the Heath from the Water Valerian, tho' they do not affect the specific character, are sufficiently striking and obvious to serve the purposes of those who gather the root for medicine.

THE HEATH VALERIAN is about two feet and a half high. The stalk is of a dusky green, and lightly hairy: the leaves are smaller than in the water kind; and the little leaves of which each of the larger is composed, are narrower, and of a deeper green. They

They are also covered with fine white hairs : the flowers are of a brighter red ; and the clusters of them are smaller. The seed also is smaller and harder than in the other.

The Valerian root sold at our druggists is collected by a particular set of people, a kind of itinerant medicine-mongers, whom, from the principal article in which they deal, we call VIPER-CATCHERS : these people, who travel over the greatest part of the kingdom in search of those animals, collect also Saffron, Valerian roots, and some other articles.

As they find a hundred plants of the Water Valerian for one of the Heath or Wood kind, that is the root they usually collect : if the other falls in their way, and will come easily out of the ground, as it will in the looser heath soils after rains, they mix it with the rest : if not, they let it intirely alone : so that we sometimes meet with great quantities of the Water kind only ; sometimes a mixture of one and the other. The first should be refused intirely, and the latter carefully

picked. Besides this mixture, they put in also the roots of a small Meadow Valerian, a distinct species of plant : and other roots less pardonably. I have raised a plant of the smooth water crowfoot, which is poisonous, from a root sold among Wild Valerian.

Dr. Keil's History of the Materia Medica, vol. 1, p. 102.

Even this careless and dangerous mixture is not all the disadvantage we suffer in receiving the drug from such hands. The time when roots have their full virtue is before they shoot up a stalk ; and in such state all that are intended for medicine should be gathered : but the plant is most obvious when in flower, the root at that time is looser in the ground, and the stalk is a handle by which it is easily pulled up. For these reasons a great part of what is brought into the shops has been taken out of the ground when the plant was in flower ; and is therefore, even though the kind were right, unfit for use in medicine. Of all these imperfections the druggist should beware, for his care will make the gatherers honest : if he is negligent, the apothecary should refuse to take such as is bad into his shop ; and in case
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of both being careless, the patient should examine the root himself, according to the following characters.

The true Heath Valerian Root is composed of longer and slenderer fibres than the other, and is tough and of a dusky brown, approaching to olive colour : and the fibres are hung with numerous threads : when broken, they have no hollow in the centre, nor any blackish circle there, but appear full and bright ; and if the root has been gathered in perfection, there is a circle of a greenish or pale hue surrounding the pith.

The taste differs from the other much more than the colour or form ; it is highly aromatic, and really agreeable. It is not without the foetid hogoe of the other, but the aromatic flavour overcomes it. This is the root, and this only, which should be gathered for medicinal use, and it is indeed a very valuable and noble medicine. A physician of distinguished abilities, one of the censors of the college, has told me, that in a late search they found
this

this true Valerian Root at one, and only one shop in London: the powder was of an olive brown, and the scent aromatic and agreeable: at other places, the powder was of a yellowish brown, and the scent offensive.

This true kind is liable, as also the false, to have the runners mixed among the real fibres, and they should be separated: it also will shew when the plant has been in stalk at the time of its being gathered, and in that state should be rejected. 'Tis only in perfection when it is preparing for shooting a stalk: and whoever will gather it at that time, will find this kingdom can afford drugs equal to those of the warmest climates.

Such are the characters by which the true Heath Valerian Root is to be known from the false kind, usually sold under its name; and when a parcel of this is found in the hands of those people who deal in it, before it is used, it should be picked and cleared: those roots which shew they have borne a stalk, are to be rejected, and the runners, or
jointed

jointed and light strings must be picked away from the true fibres. Thus the druggist will be sure he sells what the doctor prescribes: but there still remains a doubt about its value: The high flavour of the Valerian root is lost in long keeping, and when that is gone, the virtue is in great part lost with it.

This root should never be used when it is more than one year old from gathering; the seller's word is not to be taken on this account, for he is always interested to call the old new.

Under these disadvantages to which the purchase of Valerian is subjected on all hands, nothing can be so rational as the patient's collecting it for himself. Where he has the convenience of doing this, let it not be omitted; and where that is wanting, let him guide himself by the same rules in the purchase, that he would observe in collecting it. Let him buy it only fresh; only at a certain season of the year, and only in the perfect state and condition: this he will know by the following rules.

Roots are in their full vigour, and possess their virtues in greatest perfection when they are ready for shooting up a stalk, but have not yet made the effort. Till this time they are imperfect, because they have not obtained their full maturity, and after this they are exhausted. The ultimate end of nature in the growth of plants, is the formation of the seeds; when these are perfected, the root is no longer useful, and becomes a stick: and while the stalk is in its growth, the rich juices are sent up so fast to it, that the root is drained in great part of them. Therefore neither when the plant is in flower, nor when it is about to flower, should its root be gathered for medicinal purposes. While it has only the radical leaves it may: but the best time of all is just when the bud of the stalk is forming.

The true season is the middle or end of May, and the beginning of June; and the finest roots are those of seedling plants. These are known by standing single; those from runners being always near old roots. These seedlings have had the autumn and winter for

for taking their first growth, and establishing themselves in the ground; the warmth and moisture of spring have given them their full bigness, and toward the end of May, the rudiment is formed, which is to shoot up into a stalk: the root is now full of its richest juice. This is the proper season for gathering it; and the common rules in these cases, which direct autumn and spring, are equally wrong. Every last year's plant of Valerian will flower in July, and therefore will be exhausted in autumn; and the spring plants are too small and imperfect for service.

Therefore the last ten days in May, and the first fifteen of June, are the proper time; this is a period of about three weeks, and it is sufficient: the root should not be taken up at any other time, and those who buy should never receive it in any state but fresh, nor at any season except this.

The Root being gathered in perfection, the next care is to cure it. Many have thought it had most virtue fresh; but though very fine in that state, it is finer by far when
new

new dried in a proper manner. The curing of medicinal roots, is a subject we do not rightly manage in England. The Ginseng of the East-Indies, and the Salep of the Turks, are instances that they have an art in general unknown to us: we cannot preserve any root as they do Ginseng; and with regard to Salep, the root of our own Orchis would perfectly answer its purpose, if we had the same method of preparing. This is not so difficult as may be thought, but it would be wandering from the present purpose, to speak farther of it here.

When the Valerian roots are gathered, let the dirt be shook from among them, but not by striking them against hard substances. It will shake out with little violence; and they must neither be bruised nor washed. Let the leaves and runners, be cut off clean without wounding the head of the root, and lay the whole parcel in a heap in an airy place, where the sun does not come: cover them with a blanket, and leave them thus four days: then string them up on long threads at ten inches distance root from root, and hang these

these threads across an airy room, where the sun does not come.

When they are perfectly dry, shake off the remains of the dirt which hung about them in the first clearing, and put them up in boxes, pressing them close together, and covering them carefully.

Those who are unaccustomed to the thought of laying the fresh root in heaps, before it is hung up to dry, may be reminded of the custom in regard to fruits, whether intended for keeping, or for wine. Those who understand their management, always give them a sweatings of this kind, for heightening their flavour, and improving their natural qualities.

That the root of Heath Valerian in this state possesses all the virtues which have been ascribed to it, there is no doubt; and the tincture of it is a sovereign medicine in all nervous disorders, and from experience, I can affirm, that it exceeds all the remedies commonly used against that worst of head-achs, which arises from attention.

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The root if carefully preserved will retain its qualities till the return of the season for gathering a fresh parcel, and longer than this, none should be kept: if left open to the air, it will lose its virtue in half the time; nor indeed is the root ever in so high perfection as when it is fresh dried.

There are many parts of England, where the true kind is to be had in plenty. On the great heath called Hind-Head, in the road to Portsmouth, I have seen a vast quantity of it; and Ray names it upon sufficient authority near Ashwood, by the Buxton-well, in Derbyshire; at Parnham, between Brindale and Orford, in Suffolk, and on Ilford Common.

The principal places whence the roots are brought are four; the neighbourhood of Cambridge, the forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, Oxford, and the near part of Kent. The Cambridge and Kentish Valerian generally have a mixture of good and bad, for they pull up some from the heaths and high grounds, which they mix among the water
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kind : what I have seen from about Oxford, has more of the Water Valerian ; and from the forest of Dean, comes the purest and best we have : but this, like the rest, though the kind be better, is commonly taken up at a wrong season.

CHAP. IX.

The Virtues of POLYPODY, as a
GENTLE PURGE.

TO enumerate the cases in which medicines that open the bowels are required, would be almost to recount the number of diseases. They are of all others the most frequent in the necessity of their use ; but the difference there is in the operation of the several kinds, is not enough understood by many who have them in common practice.

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The stronger sorts, as Jalap, Scammony, Gamboge, Colocynth, and Elaterium, often injure the stomach; and always disturb the nervous system. They gripe the patient violently; they waste his strength; they excite hiccoughs, and spasms: and sometimes resemble even poisons in their operation; creating a burning in the stomach, with coldness of the hands and feet; and subsequent convulsions.

There are cases wherein these are wanted; but a physician, and a judicious one, is always wanted with them. In general the laxatives are infinitely to be preferred; and where more is required than they naturally perform, it may be obtained, best of all, by enlarging, or repeating their dose.

These work mildly, and can do no injury: they never inflame the stomach; nor at all affect the nerves: they operate, not by a sharp resin, but by a mild gummous juice; in which is enveloped a saccharine, essential salt: and when they have answered the purpose for which



Polypody

which they are given, they leave the body just as they found it.

Polypody grows among mossy stones, and at the stumps of old trees: it is an herb like Fern; but soft, and not so finely divided: the root is shagged with hairs, and of the thickness of one's little finger; and, when broken, is found to be green within; and to the taste at once austere and sweet.

There can be no doubt about the identity of the plant, with that the ancients celebrated: for this is not my description; but that of Dioscorides. The figure also annexed, and which, tho' small, represents Polypody as well as a designer could, who drew it from nature, in that size, in our own country, is copied from the old Dorstenius; and it is said the figures of his work were taken from those ancient drawings now preserved in the famous manuscript copy of Dioscorides at Vienna.

There is left then no dispute about the plant. The part they used, and that of

which the later authors write, is the same; the root: whence therefore shall we say arose any difference? Perhaps in some degree from the season in which it was collected. The physicians of antiquity were most careful in this matter; we are remiss to a degree, almost beyond belief. Custom now makes this wholly depend upon the care and skill of the herb-sellers in the markets: and from them 'tis well if the physician get the real herb which he prescribes; it must be wonderful indeed, if he obtain it well collected.

The course of the growth of Polypody is this. The root lives long: in spring new leaves rise up; and those of the preceding year decay. There is no other part: for every leaf is itself a perfect plant, bearing its seeds upon its back; no other stalk arising.

During the course of spring and summer, the great purpose of nature, the propagation of the plant, is carrying on in these leaves: they are growing in size, encreasing in firmness; and the little clusters of their wonderful seeds

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are gradually forming, and growing to their due maturity. In all this time the body of the root is but a place of passage, through which the juices taken in by its fibres, make their way up to the stalks and leaves; no portion of it remaining there any time.

The virtues of the plant are therefore at this season scattered through the whole compass of its growth; and retained long nowhere. The leaves at this time possess as much as the root; but no part has the juice well concocted. Through the course of winter the matter is quite otherwise; the full grown leaves having done their office, and perfected the seeds for a new succession, draw little more juices. In the mean time the fibres take in as much as usual; and this, remaining in the body of the root swells it; becomes well concocted in its substance; and by degrees surrounds and feeds the buds, which, in the ensuing summer, are to rise into new leaves. The root at this time acquires twice its former thickness: it grows

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tender,

tender, and its juice, when broke, is saccharine, thick, and gummous.

To make an infusion of it ; Take an ounce of fresh Polypody root, bruise this in a marble mortar : slice thin an ounce and half of fresh root of white Beet ; pour upon these a pint and quarter of water, boiling hot ; cover it, and let it stand twenty-four hours, then strain it off. A quarter of a pint of this clear liquor is the general dose.

As to the purposes Polypody thus prepared, may answer to the physician ; or, what is yet more important, to private families, they are numerous indeed : nor is it too much to say, or more than the judicious practiser will vouch, that there is no medicine whatsoever that may be so extensively useful ; or that will be required on so many occasions.

Habitual costiveness is one of the worst complaints that can afflict the human body ; and is not only the cause of many disorders, but in a thousand instances, where nature

would disburthen herself of what is offensive either by its quality or its quantity, forcibly retains it all within.

'Tis very unhappy that this disorder always encreases as age advances upon us ; and often grows at that period upon people who had nothing of it in their lives before. In this complaint, whether it be occasional, accidental, or habitual, Polypody is a constant relief, and an innocent one. Many fly to aloetic medicines for assistance in this case ; and fix upon themselves that painful disorder, the Piles, by their frequent use of them. Those about them tell the unhappy persons this discharge is salutary : and they go on in the use of their pills ; creating and then encreasing a disease which is falsely attributed to nature. Others in the same case of costiveness take purges which bind afterwards : and for a day's relief entail upon themselves a more fixed complaint for weeks ; and finally indeed, root it so firmly in their constitution that it requires long care, and attention to overcome it.

If such persons will be at the pains of making this infusion, they will easily find the dose, which, being taken over night, will operate once in the morning; and by a repeated use will get the better of the complaint entirely.

If any one has over-eat himself, or drank too much; as feasts and pleasing company will lead the wisest into this mistake sometimes; Polypody is the best remedy. 'Tis formed to cool the over-heated body, and ease it of a burthen too great to be supported without pain. Drastring purges irritate and inflame: they add to the complaint; and very much encrease the danger. Recourse should be had to this root, which is certain in its operation on these occasions; and while it empties, also renders the body temperate.

In hypochondriacal disorders of the worst kind, where the mind is so disturbed as to alarm the patient and his friends with apprehensions of the worst of all human maladies; this medicine used in the same manner for a
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considerable course of time will perform wonders. We have the authority of Boerhaave, that Polypody acts in these cases as a kind of vegetable soap*, and that it may be of vast service.

Nothing is so alarming to a mind not yet alienated from its true use, as an apprehension, from what it feels at times, that such a miserable accident may happen. The very fear has sometimes brought it on. But he who is alarmed in time ; who finds himself whimsical at certain seasons ; whom a full moon, or easterly wind affects ; whose passions rise for trifles to a degree above the controul of the humiliated reason ; let him betake himself to this easy remedy ; let him form a resolution in those hours when he has temper, and steadiness enough to do it ; and then keep it throughout, of taking this medicine with an unremitted assiduity : he will know how after a time to laugh at those who have held this herb unequal to the cure of a distempered mind, because of the gentleness of its opera-

* *Tanquam saponem.*

tion ;

tion *; and will join the illustrious person named before, that a continued use may render gentle medicines powerful.

C H A P. X.

The Use of Seeds of ORACH, as a VOMIT.

IN the assured opinion that medicines of our own country are always preferable to those of foreign growth, where they are equally effectual to the intended purpose; every herb that can gently move the stomach, has been tried as an emetic; and the choice, upon fair experience, falls on the Garden Orach.

This is an herb so innocent, that it may be eaten in the leaf; and has been cultivated for that purpose: two kinds of it have been raised for this use; one from a plant, na-

* See the Memoirs of the Paris Academy, 1751.

tive of the East, another from the wild Orach of our waste grounds. The seeds of both are emetic, but those of the last kind, when manured, are gentlest.

The herb grows to four foot high; the stalks are whitish, the leaves are of a faint green, and the flowers of a light greenish white. The seeds which follow these are olive-coloured.

These are to be gathered when just ripe, for if suffered to stand longer they lose part of their virtue.

A pound of these bruised and put into three quarts of spirit of a middle strength, between brandy and rectified spirit of wine, after standing six weeks afford a light and not unpleasant tincture; a table-spoonful of which taken in a cup of water-gruel, has the same effect as a dose of Ipecacuanha, only that its operation is milder, and it does not bind the bowels afterwards.

This

This is excellent wherever it is required to unload the stomach ; as after surfeits, or when any particular food disagrees ; previous to the bark in agues ; and in the beginning of most diseases. It not only cleanses the stomach with ease and expedition, but leaves it greatly strengthened afterwards.

It operates with certainty and with perfect ease : and though it does not give so rude shocks to the body as violent chemical vomits ; yet it moves the whole frame, sufficiently to do all the service of that exercise ; and to open obstructions in a very effectual manner. The whole of the medicine is thrown up at the first operation, but the motion in the stomach continues to the fourth or fifth time. And it will be easy to see by its last operation, that it has brought the obstructing matter from whatever part of the body was the seat of the disorder,

After the operation the person is to be put to bed ; and a gentle sweat will follow ; carrying off whatever offending matter the mo-

tions had dislodged; and thus preventing many a long disease.

It cures head-achs, wandering pains, and the first attacks of the rheumatism. As some stomachs are more difficultly worked upon by vomits than others: if the first does not perform its office, a second table-spoonful may be taken without fear.

CH A P. XI.

The Virtues of the great WILD LETTUCE,
as an OPIATE.

THE smell and taste of the great Wild Lettuce, have given, to all who have examined it, an idea of Opium.

The milky juice which runs from it when broken, if suffered to harden, obtains a dusky colour,

colour, and possesses in a higher degree the same qualities; and late experience has shewn that it may supersede the use of that drug with great advantage.

The plant is common on ditch banks, and is sufficiently conspicuous. It grows to five feet high; the stalks are of a purplish brown, the leaves are of a fresh fine green; and the innumerable little flowers, with which its top and branches are crowned, are perfectly like those of the common Lettuce of our gardens, and are of a light yellow.

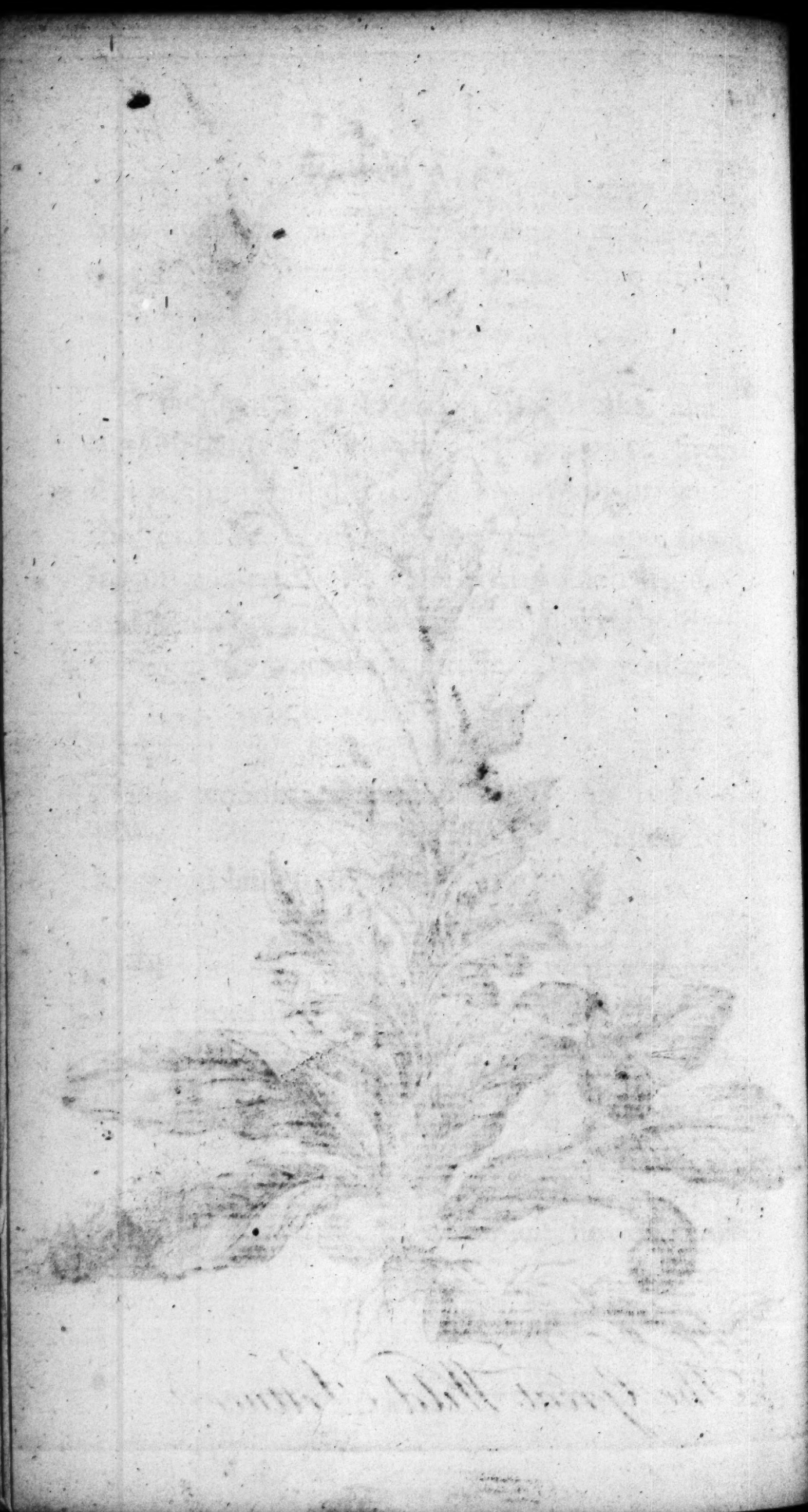
No wonder there should be this resemblance, for our Lettuce has been raised by long and laboured culture from it.

In the month of April the young plants, raised from the scattered seeds of the last year, are in their vigour; and these contain the great virtue of the plant.

Cut off the roots just below the ground, and catch the milky juice which flows in vast
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The Great Wild Lettuce?



abundance from them ; let this dry, and it becomes a kind of Opium. This dissolves freely in Mountain wine, and if one ounce of it be put to a gallon of the wine, and suffered to stand till it is dissolved, there is produced a great and excellent anodyne.

The dose is a tea-spoonful in a glass of water. It answers all the purposes of Laudanum, without its nauseous qualities: the juice scarce altering the colour, taste, or smell of the wine.

It quiets perturbations of the spirits ; and is refreshing, sedative, and anodyne. Pains of whatsoever kind are eased by it in a few minutes : it restores nature to her usual course, by taking off spasms, and convulsive contractions ; and stays fluxes of all kinds proceeding from irritation.

It operates by a delicate and subtile power ; refreshing the nerves, dispelling melancholy, and exciting pleasing sensations : it is the first of cordials. It comforts and invigorates the whole frame ; prevents and relieves faintness,
low

low spirits, disquietude, and anxieties ; and is a sovereign cure for settled melancholy : for these purposes it is best taken in a glass of Mountain wine.

It gives constantly and certainly rest both to the body and mind, in whatever condition of pain or disturbance ; conquering the most troublesome watchings, and freeing the patient in whatever case from great torment of restless nights : And as it is not composed of Opium, it will answer all these purposes where that has failed, or lost its force by use.

F. I. N. I. S.